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LETTER OF EDWARD SHIPPEN OF LANCASTER,
1754.

[The following interesting and affectionate letter of Edward Shippen, of Lancaster, to his son Edward, later the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, was presented to The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, by Col. William Brooke Rawle. On the back is endorsed: "Copy—my letter to my son Edward Shippen, March 20, 1754," and it is the letter, which the text states, "I have a copy in my own handwriting, which I shall keep secret and very safe."]

LANCASTER, 20th March, 1754.

MY DEAR SON:—

I now send you by Doctor Boude a Deed to Mr. Joseph Marriotte for one Acre & 12 Perches of Land: Receive the money being forty Pounds; and as I have promised to Joseph to make up his £133.6.8 Legacy, send him up a Receipt for said forty Pounds and when that comes to hand, he shall give me one for the same. I expect soon to be able to raise the remainder.

I also send you John Denton's Deed: You will see that Doctor Boude is a witness to both of them: Let him prove them on sight for his stay is to be but one Day in the City. The widow Price the other Witness will be there in a weeks time: She is Mr. Hesselius Daughter and lives with her Father. Doctor Graeme will owe me £25. or near it on the first day of June: dont call for that money yet—I design it all for Mr. Nevitte who is making my Stair Case; Pay him five Pounds to encourage him to go on briskly and if you are scant of money you may give him an Order on the Doctor for so much.

Send Sammy for W^m Gerrard who leased my Orchard and ask him for Six or eight Pounds: I have an Acco^t to settle with him, and he will fall more than that in my Debt: he and his son William bought two or three Loads of my Household Goods up here & I paid him £3 or £4. at one

time & I sent him 10 Pounds by the Post: William Gerard mowed my Six Acres Meadow last year for his own use, but I made no price with him; he was to pay ad valorem; he and I never disagree on Settlements. I would sell that Meadow, because I want to raise Money to pay to Mr. Storke's Administrators near £300. Sterl^s. I always asked £42.10. p. Acre for it, but on this occasion I would take £40. p. Acre. What did my Bro^r Joseph meadow (a quarter of a mile further off than mine) fetch at Vendue? and also his Orchard of 8 Acres? If you cant sell my said Meadow then you may let some Body cut the first Crop of Grass for £5. or £6. which they must be obliged to carry off as soon as the Hay is fit & leave the Meadow to myself: I wish Mr Marriote would take the first Crop; I would let him have it almost at his own price, my views in this, is in hopes, that when once he has experienced that Sort of Grass, he may become my Chapman.

My son Jo. & myself rise every morning at about Sun rising, having prepared over night, some dry hickory for a good fire—we then sit close to our Business till 9 o clock and we find that we can do more by that time than in all the rest of the Day, as we are afterwards, often interrupted in our necessary affairs; neither do we receive Visits, nor return any until it is near Sun sett, and we eat so moderately, without tasting a drop of Strong Liquour; that the whole day seems like a long morning to us: And if a best friend should happen to come to saunter away an hour or two with us, we make it a fixt Rule plainly to tell him, that we are engaged, that we cannot possibly wait upon him: And then that we may be sufficiently refreshed with Sleep, we have agreed upon ten o clock at night for going to Bed, and so after eating a light supper and drinking a little Wine we lay ourselves down with light Stomachs, cool Heads and quiet Consciences.

Now this Practice I most affectionately recommend to you. Your promotion and happiness in this vexatious World will depend principally upon your own Conduct; and

the more the World precieves you are able to do for yourself, the more ready it will be to offer you its best Services. It is too common a thing for Young Men when they first appear upon the Stage of Action to aim at grandeur, and Politeness; they delight to see their Friends (often falsely so called) frequently at their Houses & to entertain them in a genteel Manner; they are pleased with this, and the acquaintance to dine with them, & then afterwards to sit at table two or three Hours tipling of Wine and Punch, which rendering the Company unfit for any business; a walk to the bowling Green, or to the Billiard Table is proposed and as soon Consented to, and on their return from thence in the evening instead of being Calm and Cool, and having the pleasure of reflecting upon a well spent day, either for the advantage of their Family or the Publick or both, they are become so stupid that they don't know what else to do with themselves, but either to go to Tavern or to one or other of their own Houses, to drink away care till the Clock strikes twelve, & then being quite Devil & quite Beast, they stagger away home, to Snore, Spue, and Groan, by the sides of their poor innocent young Wives, who deserve ten Thousand better things at their hands; and all this, after the poor things have been moping at home & bemoaning themselves at hard fate and crying out a hundred times in an evening—Well! if these be the Pleasures of Matrimony, would to God we had remained under our Parents Roofs to this Day; or if sometimes they are obliged to go abroad for Company, does that afford them any real Comfort? No, far from it, or if it did help to pass away the time now and then, is that any excuse for such unkind conduct in Husbands. But to return, I say when they have wallowed in their Beds till about eleven o'clock next morning, then they raise their unclean Bodys in order to Act the same part over again. And can any rational Creature answer such a Behaviour to God, his Wife & family or even to himself? And besides will not the practice of these things bring a Man into Contempt, & soon reduce him to Penury and Want, by destroying his

Constitution, and of course his Capacity for his Employment. Your married men shou'd be very dilligent, frugal & careful, that they may not only be able always to support a wife & a housefull of Children, but also lay up a hundred or two pounds for every one of them when they go out into the Wide World. Young folks ought never to begin where their Industrious Saving Parents left off. I have almost gone through the World & have gained a little experience by my own mistakes and Blunders, having had no Friends to advise me as you and your Brother and Sister have, and therefore I hope you will all three of you be always ready and willing to obey my Instructions. You are not able to conceive without great Consideration, the unspeakable advantage of having such a Bosom friend, that always has & always will, make your happiness his Study; and whilst others will behave and speak to you as suits their Interest, he will never tell you anything but the Truth. But then Consider, as valuable as this Priviledge is, you are soon to expect to be deprived of it, for according to Course of Nature I cannot stay long here; nor do I, I assure you expect to live anything like the age of a Man, but we must all wait till our Change come, and if I was sure it was very near at hand I hope it would not be grievous, but Joyous, and as I am sure I must then hold up my Hand at the Bar of God I am resolved by Divine Assistance to work out my Salvation with fear and trembling—But I have made a Digression.

I am not able to express the great anxiety I have had to support and educate my family and so I say no more on that head.

Avoid what the world calls pleasure. Pleasure is only for crowned Heads and other great men who have their Incomes sleeping and waking, but young men who are just beginning the world ought to shudder at the thoughts of the Consequence of spending their youthful Days in Idleness; neither would I refuse young People some innocent Diversions, provided they are well timed and not too often. If you would seek pleasure, you will find it in temperance

and Sobriety, Charity and Virtue and in the Dilligent & Honest pursuit of your concerns. Will it not yield a Man great Pleasure in the Evening, to think that he has been closely employ'd all day for the support of the friend of his Bosom, and his little Babies all hovering about him? And how sweet and refreshing is it for a man and his wife often to spend their evenings together at home without any other company? And for my part rather than be deprived by my very best friends of such a pleasure sometimes, I should chuse to retire into our Chamber privately that even our own Servants should not know where to find us out. But I have not done with the Scheme for the husbanding of our precious time, and for guarding ourselves against intemperance. Go to your Cousin Allen, oppulent as he is, & you will find him up early & busily employ'd until Coffee house hours, and when he invites any number of Gentlemen to dinner, which he can well afford, he soon desires the favour of being excused from drinking, and this without Blushing. Visit Mr. Francis, Mr. Turner, Mr. Willing and other temperate, Industrious Gentlemen, I mean in the Daytime, and you will presently see by their Countenances that they had rather have your Room than your Company.

If Mr. Burd had taken my advice, I wont presume to say, he should have had success, but then if he had failed in the world, I believe he would not have been in Debt, & then not have brought an intollerable burthen upon my shoulders.

I desire that you will never go a fishing to the Capes or any other dangerous place, nor that you will keep Company with such and such any more; I say I beseech you speedily to break off that ruinous sett of Companions.

Remember, if a man should spend 3/ in Liquor necessarily or otherwise in his own House every Day, and 3/6 at Club every night, and £3. a year at the Assembly, and £4. p. ann. for the Concert, it will require £125. 12. 6. to support such Proceedings. And Remember, that if a Man rises

at ten & sits at Tea Table till eleven, dines at one, & sits at Table till three, goes to the Coffee House, where he ought by all means to go at four, which ends the Day; I say, if a man makes use of that practice, Then he will only have three Hours a Day to do his Business in & no time at all for improvement in his studys.

This Letter I write, God knows my heart, in pure Love and Affection for your Instruction, as far as you may stand in Need of it, and I desire you will lock it up in your Drawer for my Sake. I have copy in my own hand writing which I shall keep a Secret & very safe. *Consider—Consider* it & May God bless and preserve you for Jesus Christ his sake.

I am Dear Son
Your most affectionate Father
EDW. SHIPPEN.